

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EPIDEMIC OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the epidemic of gun violence is endangering many in our communities both large and small. Illegal guns are being used at an increasing rate to harm our children, our neighbors, and our police officers. We must not allow this spiral to continue.

One example of a community heavily affected by gun violence is in Pennsylvania, where in 2004 the State led the Nation in homicide rates among African-American victims. Handguns were used in 81 percent of the State's murders. In Pennsylvania's largest city, Philadelphia, more than 2,000 people were injured by firearms last year alone. According to the Philadelphia police department, this represents an increase of 31 percent in just 3 years. Philadelphia saw 406 people murdered in 2006, up from 380 in 2005.

Just a short trip south of Pennsylvania lies another example of the how guns are affecting our communities. According to the nonprofit organization Ceasefire Maryland, a crime is committed with an assault rifle every 48 hours in the State of Maryland. The Maryland State Legislature is attempting to address this horrifying statistic by considering a bill backed by Governor Martin O'Malley that would ban 45 different assault weapons statewide. This action could serve as an excellent example of a legislature taking a commonsense approach to reducing gun violence. Congress and President Bush have allowed the Federal assault weapons ban to expire.

Month after month, we watch these tragedies unfold on the news and yet Congress has not taken the necessary steps to help control these acts of violence or ease the anxiety that many parents and families feel each day as their loved ones go to school, church, or work. According to the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, gun crime rose 49.4 percent nationally between 2004 and 2005. Almost 5.9 million people were victims of gun violence between 1996 and 2005.

The American people have a right to demand that their schools, places of worship, and other public places be better protected from gun violence. Much more can be done to break the cycle of gun violence that plagues our communities. I urge my colleagues to take up and pass commonsense legislation that will help address this problem.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:30 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 700. An act to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to extend the

pilot program for alternative water source projects.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 700. An act to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to extend the pilot program for alternative water source projects; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following joint resolution was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 9. Joint resolution to revise United States policy on Iraq.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 987. An act to endorse further enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and to facilitate the timely admission of new members to NATO, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-905. A communication from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Membership in a Registered Futures Association" (RIN3038-AC29) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-906. A communication from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Conflicts of Interest in Self-Regulation and Self-Regulatory Organizations" (RIN3038-AC28) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-907. A communication from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Advertising by Commodity Pool Operators, Commodity Trading Advisors, and the Principals Thereof" (RIN3038-AC35) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-908. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Entry of Certain Cement Products from Mexico Requiring a Commerce Department Import License" (RIN1505-AB68) received on March 6, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-909. A communication from the Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, the report of proposed legislation entitled "National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-910. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, the report of proposed legislation entitled "Nuclear Fuel

Management and Disposal Act"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-911. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and Operating Permits Program; State of Missouri" (FRL No. 8284-8) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-912. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Iowa; Interstate Transport of Pollution" (FRL No. 8285-1) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-913. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Kansas; Interstate Transport of Pollution" (FRL No. 8286-3) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-914. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Missouri" (FRL No. 8286-1) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-915. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Polymer of 2-Ethyl-2-(Hydroxymethyl)-1,3-Propanediol, Oxirane, Methyloxirane, 1,2-Epoxyalkanes; Tolerance Exemption" (FRL No. 8116-9) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-916. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prothioconazole; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8113-6) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-917. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "State-Administered Programs" (RIN1890-AA13) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-918. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Interim Final Rule Relating to Time and Order of Issuance of Domestic Relations Orders" (RIN1210-AB15) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BIDEN, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment:

S. 377. A bill to establish a United States-Poland parliamentary youth exchange program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110-33).